

The banner features a dark blue background with a white waterfall on the left. The text 'Butte County' is written in a large, white, serif font at the top, and 'General Plan 2030' is written in a smaller, white, serif font below it. To the left of the text is the Butte County seal, which is circular and contains a landscape scene with mountains and a river. Below the banner is a curved strip of various landscape images, including a field of yellow flowers, a cow in a field, a mountain range, a sunset over a field, a row of trees, a lake, and a wooden barn.

Butte County

General Plan 2030

Butte County General Plan 2030 Gridley/Butte County Meeting – Summary Notes March 15, 2007, 12:00 PM

Attendees

- ◆ Jerry Ann Fichter, City of Gridley Mayor
- ◆ Frank Hall, City of Gridley Vice Mayor
- ◆ Paul McIntosh, County of Butte CAO
- ◆ Greg Iturria, County of Butte CAO
- ◆ Tim Snellings, County of Butte DDS
- ◆ Chuck Thistlethwaite, County of Butte DDS
- ◆ Dan Breedon, County of Butte DDS
- ◆ Jack Slota, City of Gridley Administration
- ◆ Andrea Redamonti, City of Gridley Planning
- ◆ Stephen Lucas, Butte LAFCO
- ◆ Steve Betts, Butte LAFCO
- ◆ Chris Devine, BCAG
- ◆ David Early, DC&E
- ◆ Tanya Higgins, DC&E
- ◆ Jeff Goldman, EDAW

1. Introductions and Meeting Overview

Tim Snellings described the goals of this meeting, highlighting the City/County Summit, issues that were raised at that meeting, the Guiding Principles, and the Existing Conditions Briefing Book.

2. Butte County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan

Chris Devine presented a summary of the Butte County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP), including the project status, benefits of a HCP, the preliminary plan area, covered activities, the working preliminary covered species list, the schedule and phases of the project, and the draft ecological baseline report. Although the project is not expected to be complete until March 2010, BCAG will share administrative drafts of information with the Cities and the County so that they can coordinate their conservation elements. BCAG has not decided on a conservation strategy, but expects to do this by March 2008. Information about the HCP/NCCP is available at www.buttehcp.com.

3. Local Agency Formation Commission Presentation

Steve Lucas provided an overview of the Butte Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The Commission has a deadline to review existing Sphere of Influence (SOI) plans by January 1, 2008. However, because each of the municipalities is undergoing a General Plan update, the Commission acknowledges that this deadline will not be met. In the meantime, LAFCO will defer all annexation and amendment requests until the SOI reviews are complete, due to possible litigation if they proceed. The Commission strongly encourages each City to include sphere projections in its General Plan, allowing one EIR to cover the General Plan update and the Sphere amendment. LAFCO would like to work cooperatively with the Cities and the County to ensure General Plan consistency with LAFCO goals, which include agricultural land protection, effective delivery of services, and revenue neutrality.

4. Discussion on Gridley's SOI Boundary and Areas of Anticipated Growth

David Early introduced the four main issues listed on the agenda, which were raised at the City/County Summit and include: land use and development, agricultural preservation and buffers, transportation, and funding for government services.

A. Gridley's SOI Boundary and the Area of Concern (AOC)

- ◆ There is little undeveloped land remaining in the existing SOI for Gridley to continue to develop, so the City is embarking on a General Plan Update and Sphere Amendment to extend the SOI to the north to include about 1,200 additional acres. The new SOI would be bounded by West Biggs Gridley Road to the west, Mead Avenue to the east, and South Avenue to the north. The City's decision to grow towards the north is due to issues surrounding the railroad and highway to the south, where it would be difficult to create new crossings. There are large agricultural parcels to the west, where increased development would also create more traffic through the city to reach Highway 99. Finally, there are flooding constraints to the east. Within the proposed new SOI boundary, some of the parcels are already subdivided and there is some development. The proposed northern boundary is also an existing school district boundary.
- ◆ Some landowners immediately north of the Gridley city limits were approached by the City of Biggs to inquire about possible annexation, but they refused.
- ◆ The City of Gridley, with input from the JTS development company, proposed a boundary to the City of Biggs before the last election in which Gridley would include more land along Highway 99, while Biggs would extend further south along the railroad tracks to include more of the JTS development. The City of Biggs first declined the offer, but has since accepted, but Gridley is no longer making that offer. There was never a formal request made to LAFCO. LAFCO staff indicated that such a boundary does not appear logical and would likely be problematic.
- ◆ The City of Gridley is open to a greenbelt buffer between the two cities. The City has not defined the width or nature of the buffer, but feels that it could help to preserve the individual character of each city.
- ◆ The Cities of Biggs and Gridley have a financial interest in residential development because of their electricity sales.
- ◆ West Biggs Gridley Road would serve as the agriculture/urban boundary under the current SOI boundary proposal from Gridley, although it was agreed that the railroad would be better, in part because of the expense involved to cross utilities and services over the railroad tracks. The City of Gridley is open to the idea of removing properties to the west of the railroad tracks. The City

is also open to using some of the land proposed in their SOI boundary for a greenbelt, but would like to see a proposal. A list of the property owners to the west of the railroad tracks was requested in the meeting; the list of property owners are included in Attachment 1.

- ◆ The City of Gridley would like a neutral party to provide assistance to determine a logical boundary; BCAG, LAFCO and Butte County have some neutrality and an interest in resolving this issue.
- ◆ The City of Gridley would also like to address development standards for the highway so that there is consistency between the two cities. The City proposed such standards through LAFCO a year or so ago, but the City of Biggs did not participate in a Memorandum of Understanding for the standards.

B. Highway 99/Highway 99 Bypass Corridor

- ◆ Highway 99 is designated a major highway in the existing Gridley General Plan; the City would like the County's General Plan to also designate it a major highway.
- ◆ Caltrans has sent the City of Gridley a letter explaining that they are planning to abandon the bypass project. The City has objected to this abandonment.
- ◆ Caltrans has already acquired many of the parcels in the project area, and Gridley has considered purchasing them. The City is concerned that it will "become a Lincoln" with backed up traffic, and will consider building the project themselves at a smaller scale depending on the costs.

C. Development Standards

- ◆ The City developed a streetscape plan in 2002 using Caltrans funding. The plan includes architectural guidelines to replicate the feel of a downtown commercial area that is pedestrian friendly. Although the plan was not officially finished and the standards are not required, developers have been willing to use them.
- ◆ The City will address community standards as part of its General Plan update process. Staff would like community standards to reflect its agricultural setting. The kickoff General Plan update meeting will be held on August 28, 2007.
- ◆ There have been projects approved in the adjacent unincorporated county that do not meet City standards. The Sphere areas are in need of common standards for the City and County. Because this will be an issue for all five municipalities, the County plans to develop one set of standards for specific types of development to reduce workload.

D. Agricultural Preservation and Buffers

- ◆ The County has adopted an agricultural buffer ordinance; they will work with City staff on a separate track to address this issue.
- ◆ There was a concern about land subdivisions southwest of Gridley in the unincorporated area, and the possibility of mapping those areas that need attention was raised.

E. Transportation Issues

- ◆ The Gridley Bicycle Plan was adopted two years ago. The Plan proposes a bicycle trail connection to Biggs along the railroad tracks and a bicycle route along West Biggs Gridley Road (which is problematic due to poor road conditions). A Gridley Councilmember spoke with a

Biggs Councilmember recently, who seemed amenable to possible coordination on bicycle connections.

- ◆ The City of Gridley has considered an extension of Washington Street to connect to Biggs, running somewhat parallel to the railroad tracks. This would allow West Biggs Gridley Road to remain a rural agriculture road. There are existing conflicts between commuters and farm traffic, and there was a concern raised that West Biggs Gridley Road could become a back doorway for traffic.
- ◆ The existing Gridley General Plan includes a new railroad crossing to the north of town for the Heron Landing development, but it is not expected that it will happen.
- ◆ Grid street pattern developments that reflect the older downtown will naturally filter traffic to the highway better than cul-de-sac developments like the Heron Landing development.

F. Funding of Government Services

- ◆ The County's Board of Supervisors has clearly stated that it would like urban development to remain within the cities, but this creates a fiscal problem because of increased burdens on the county with no additional tax base. Tax-sharing agreements are a tool to deal with this issue. The City of Gridley is open to ideas like the tax-sharing agreements.
- ◆ City staff expressed that, generally, there is a mixture of attitudes towards growth, development and community character in Gridley. Newer residents would like to keep it the same, while others complain about certain services that require travel.
- ◆ This item will be a topic of future discussion. The County Chief Administrative Office (CAO) will do some research and analysis on this topic.

5. Next Steps

The County's next one-on-one meeting will be with the City of Biggs in two weeks. Shortly after that meeting, LAFCO, Butte County and DC&E will develop a strategy for Gridley, Biggs and the AOC. The County will continue to work on these issues through the General Plan update, and will meet again in the future in a similar forum to discuss development guidelines, transportation facilities and bikeways, and questions of funding and tax revenue. The City suggested a meeting frequency of once every three to six months, although they would like to meet again soon after the Biggs meeting.